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Pers & A E STEVENSON

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In The Nation

Last Drippings From the Great Certified 'Leak'

By ARTHUR KROCK

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6—Probably it was just luck, but maybe it was that sixth sense called "a nose for the news," which was responsible for the unplanned encounter of this department today with one of the many reporters who were given a fill-in of the secret discussions among the nine top security officials of how the recent Cuban crisis should be dealt with by President Kennedy. But, whatever the reason, this colleague generously supplied the following extracts from the transcript of who said what:

McG. B. "Let's run all the ideas up the flagpole and see who salutes. What we need is a spell-out, everything-wise and expertise, definitize, maximize and optimize escalation-wise until we finalize. In other words let's put the ideas on the train and watch which one gets off at Westport."

"You mean, toss it in the well and see what kinda splash it makes? Follow it into the high grass and see if it eats; get things down to where the rubber meets the road. Remember, what the job will be and when it will be done is still a row of apple trees away."

Mc N. "So right! Let's be sure we have plenty of options and be certain there will be no overkill. And then, I think, after these options are mirror clear, and to pursue this further would be counter-productive, we can melt this ball of wax and move the hardware from the shelf. Suppose I start batting up the fun-goes. How's about this opener—a kind of gradual naval blockade in the Caribbean, just the Honey Fitz and the Marlin at first, and wait for the Schmerdovolsk to heave in sight—"

(Himself.) "The word is 'hove.'"
Mc N. "Okay, hove. Now you well may ask, what do we do then? Of course, our vessels will have Russian-speaking skippers. I repeat, what will we do then?"

(McG.) "I thought you were going to tell us. But, interimwise, let me feed this one into the computer. While the Schmerdovolsk, with (according to our latest intelligence) a cargo of seven Kropotkin IRBM's is getting within bow-shot of the Honey Fitz and the Marlin, Castro (also according to our latest intelligence) will be in the hot seat at the National having his whiskers

curled while he is entangled with the curlers, we'll launch an air-strike on the factories that make his cigars. I predict this will cause utter demoralization of the regime; news of this situation will be passed by radio to the Schmerdovolsk; she will turn back; and the Honey Fitz and the Marlin can return to their stations, mission accomplished."

(D. D.) "Sounds impressive, I'm for that."

(A. E. S.) "No, John and Doug, we gotta negotiate first. I'll negotiate with Kusnetsov. No, I can't negotiate with the Warsaw Pact, our bases for theirs. Deal. I mean the one that doesn't get up every day breathing fire through his mustache) can negotiate with the O.A.S. And if all this doesn't come to much, we can negotiate a swap of Ft. Knox for the offensive Soviet weaponry in Cuba."

(Voices). "He wants a Munich" ... "That soft stuff again" ... "Boss, we're eyeball to eyeball with you-know-who, and I think the other fellow just blinked" ... "If they get away with this one we'll be a paper tiger, a second-class power." "I can hardly believe my ears." "Gracious!"

(R. F. K.) "Now, don't lets us get divided into hoves and dawks ... No, I am not lugging in Brumus again; I said, 'Dawks' ... My brother will never be a party to a Pearl Harbor, will you, sir? But we may all be fighting for our lives in two weeks, according to how hairy it is, as Larry always says."

(Himself). "Whichever way the decision goes, those who are against it will be the lucky ones. I don't want the Honey Fitz or the Marlin to intercept a single Russian ship until absolutely necessary. Send that order in the clear. Now all we have to decide is the definition of 'absolutely necessary.' But, as someone just said—oh, it was my brother—we're all agreed, or anyhow we better be, that if the Russians are ready to go to nuclear war, we might as well have the showdown now as six months later ... Any questions? [After a show of one hand] I'll get back to you later."

According to this authoritative fill-in, the only possible inaccuracy in the above is that this last remark of the President's was not at the

x Pers & A E STEVENSON
x Pers & McG. B. BUNDY
x Pers & Robert McNAMARA
x Pers & Robert KENNEDY
x Pers & 7

Douglas Dillon

ADR Stevenson

Robt. Kennedy

The President

Mc George Bundy

TER SCREENSEN

Robt. McNAMARA

THE PRESIDENT

John McCone

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